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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the importance of strong working relationships with local high schools, Triton College (Illinois) has recently developed a series of initiatives which provide an ongoing avenue for students to experience Triton's programs and services while still in high school and thereby facilitate continuity of learning. One group of programs, focusing primarily on dropout prevention and intervention, includes: (1) the High School/College Partnership, which provides summer enrichment programs, after-school and summer jobs, tutoring, career exploration, recognition awards, and a tracking system for high-risk youth; (2) opportunities for dropouts to complete high school course work at Triton through the Alternative High School, Evening High School, and Adult High School; and (3) a cooperative English-as-a-Second Language-Program. A second set of programs focuses on serving gifted and talented students. Triton's Scholars Program, which is designed as a "college within a college," offers courses modeled on those of prestigious colleges and universities, heavily utilizes guest lecturers, and provides scholarships. In addition, academically talented students who qualify for advanced placement have the opportunity to take several courses for college credit in their senior year. A third project is the Student Post-Secondary Plan, which seeks to make the 13th year of schooling as routine as the previous 12 through a rigorous program of assessment and counseling. Triton's most recent initiative is the Regional Vocational Articulation Project. In fall 1989, 12 articulated 2 + 2/prep-tech programs will be in place in business, industrial technology, and home economics. (JMC)

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Focus on Student Achievement:

S C H O O L A N D C O L L E G E P A R T N E R S H I P

Leadership 2000

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THE PARTNERSHIP

It is becoming increasingly clear to educators and the public alike that America must redesign its educational system if it is to prepare a work force to fit the economic and social conditions of the 21st century. Technological advances, ubiquitous on a global scale, not only allow greater interaction worldwide but actually promote the interdependence of peoples. What is true of nations on the macro scale is equally true of educational institutions on the micro. Collaboration is being called for in education, along with a heightened sense that Bud Hodgkinson is correct: from K through college is "All One System." Leadership in the community college setting, then, involves building strong working relationships with local educators and school superintendents.

The leadership of Triton College began learning this lesson of interdependence early on. In December 1983 more than 75 local educators and school board members met with key administrators at Triton College to discuss the results of national reports on education as well as the need for cooperation among district educational institutions at all levels. The two-day conference entitled "Partnership for Excellence" was the result of Triton trustee Pat Pavini's discussion with the college president who worked to open communications among the elementary and secondary schools and the community college. The result of this interchange was the establishment in the spring of 1984 of the School/College Partnership consisting of Triton College with the six high schools in its district.

Approximately two years ago Triton inaugurated a new president, Dr. James Catanzaro, and his introduction to the group renewed vitality, bringing important new initiatives with the accelerated levels of cooperation. The ultimate goal of the partnership is expansion of the educational level of the citizens of its district and the real significance of the partnership results from the relationship of trust that exists among its principal players. The success of partnership efforts comes from the sense in each of the institutions of the real commitment of the CEO to partnership projects and it is felt from the top down. This sense is reinforced by joint in-service programs for administrators from the college and high schools that more recently have included the elementary superintendents and administrators as well.

The interdependence of the high schools and the college includes jointly operating extension centers providing both credit and non-credit classes in the high schools. Examples of efforts on students' behalf are jointly sponsored competitions including Scholastic Art, TEAMS (Test of Engineering Aptitude, Mathematics and Science), and Business Olympics. The most important initiatives, however, are those that provide an ongoing avenue for students to experience Triton's programs and services while

still in high school and thus facilitate the continuity of student learning. The main foci of these include programs for dropout prevention and the gifted and talented, a regional vocational articulation, and project for post-secondary planning for every student each of which is explained below:

DROPOUT PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Federal and State Funded Programs

The High School/College Partnership, in cooperation with the Proviso Township feeder elementary districts is attempting to attack, with federal and state funding, the school dropout problem of a metropolitan school system undergoing rapid demographic change. The program serves 400 potential dropouts and 100 out-of-school youth who have dropped out over the last five years. Emphasis at the secondary level is on early identification of dropouts in order to put in place support services and at the elementary level on intervention with the at-risk target group.

Identification of at-risk students required the expansion of the existing high school data base into a management information system linking student characteristics and needs with appropriate intervention services. The intervention strategies include an Elementary to Secondary Bridge Program and a Structured Studies Program focusing on the entry-level, at-risk and reentering secondary school students. Two alternative programs, the Alternative and the Evening High School Programs have been expanded to address the academic and remedial needs of the older at-risk students and the older reentering youth. Supplemental personalized case-managed intervention services are delivered as needed.

The focus of the program is to:

1. Identify underachieving students and students who move several times in a single year

2. Provide summer enrichment programs (which hire and assign selected 10th, 11th, and 12th graders to serve as mentors/peer counselors) are designed after interdisciplinary gifted programs and use computers to teach word processing and graphics

3. Require parental presence at school and support activities

4. Develop after school and/or summer job commitments with local industry for 16-year-old students with cumulative 2.5 GPA.

5. Develop the listening skills of faculty, staff, and administrators to these special needs students

6. Provide tutorial services

7. Provide career exploration, financial aid, and scholarship information

8. Provide for local church involvement

9. Provide recognition awards

10. Develop a tracking system

The Alternative High School and The Evening High School

Several opportunities exist for dropouts to complete high school course work at Triton. One example is the Alternative High School which enables students under 21 years of age--those who for one reason or another find the day high school setting a difficult one to adjust to (pregnant teen, etc.) or who simply find it difficult to mainstream--to earn the credits needed to graduate. Admission to the classes is determined by the high school, and the classes are taught by certified high school faculty.

The Evening High School serves those students currently enrolled in high school or dropouts under the age of 21 who need to make up deficiencies in order to graduate. These courses are taught on the Triton campus in the evening by certified high school faculty and the content is approved by the Evening High School Advisory Committee.

The most notable of these alternative high school programs, the Adult High School, allows students over 21 to take course work that has been articulated through all six high school districts and thus permits the student to graduate with a diploma from the high school in whose district he resides. The articulation process, in order to assure the various high schools that, in fact, their standards were being met, was an extended process. It has now been in place for several years and the first graduates are beginning to file out of the completion end of the pipeline.

English as a Second Language programs

To meet the needs of limited English speaking high school students, a cooperative program was developed and housed at Elmwood Park High School. Students attend intensive day-long classes at the high school; from day one they are mainstreamed into English language activities starting with Physical Education. This program allows limited English proficiency

students to work toward their high school diploma at the same time that they are learning English.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Scholars Program

The concept of a Triton Scholars Program originated and took shape at the Spring 1988 School/College Partnership Retreat. Designed as a "college within a college," the program is targeted for bright students who, for a number of reasons, are unable to attend prestigious colleges and universities. Potential students may be:

* Financially unable to meet the tuition costs for four years of a prestigious institution.

* Insufficiently mature to manage their life away from home or in a large institutional setting with hundreds of students in lecture classes.

* "Non-dreamers," i.e., exceptionally bright students with little knowledge of their own potential.

* Reverse transfers from four-year Illinois schools or private institutions who need time at home for a variety of reasons.

* Returning students who have been in the work force for a number of years and are now dedicated, purposeful students.

* Minority students who, for a variety of reasons, have not considered attending prestigious institutions.

* Vets, returning to school after military service, who are serious about a college education.

Significant aspects of the Scholars Program include the development of courses modeled (specifically in terms of intensity of reading and writing requirements) after institutions such as Georgetown, University of Chicago, Stanford, and Boston University. Although the Triton faculty will be teaching the courses, guest lecturers will play an important part in the Scholars Program. Triton Trustee Scholarships (providing free tuition for all in-district students in the top 10 percent of their high school class) will play a significant role in financing students in the Scholars Program and participants will be carefully schooled concerning the transfer agreements and scholarship programs Triton has developed (and will continue to develop) with prestigious four-year institutions. All Triton Scholars will work with a faculty mentor for the full two years and have completed a portfolio of achievements prior to transfer.

Mr. Joseph Meyer, an Oak Park-River Forest High School faculty member, who had been on leave to serve as the director at the Illinois Math and Science Institute, has been "rented" to Triton for the FY 88-89 academic year to act as interim project director. Mr. Meyer has university contacts nationally which will ease scholarship negotiations with those institutions.

The district superintendents, with the Triton administration, presented the rationale for the Scholars Program at the April 28, 1988, Board meeting. Trustee approval that night set in progress the two-year-long planning for a fall 1990 enrolling of students.

Advanced Placement

Academically talented students who qualify in their respective high schools for Advanced Placement have the opportunity of taking several courses in their senior year for college credit. This credit-in-escrow program allows students who have additional time in their regular high school day beyond what is required by state funding regulations for daily attendance to take classes in their high school from faculty hired as adjuncts by Triton College. The main motivation for this program came from students who frequently found that their advanced placement credit served only to move them from one required course to another higher level version of the same. Many are now opting for college credit instead. If they receive an acceptable grade, they are virtually insured that they can transfer course credit and the "savings" both in terms of time and dollars (particularly for those who later attend a private college) is significant. Over 350 high school students in the partnership district have chosen to take these college courses during the 88-89 academic year.

STUDENT POST SECONDARY PLAN

The goal of this project is to establish a routine process whereby high school counselors can help students plan for their futures. One special aspect of the Post-Secondary Plan is that it involves an important investment by both the high school and the college. On the one hand, it shows that the high school's commitment goes beyond graduation day and on the college's part that there is a tie-in to the young person in our district, whether or not he/she chooses to attend Triton.

In order to set up this project, Bill Tracy, a dean (counselor) from Oak Park-River Forest High School, was employed by Triton for a year. With the assistance of a committee of other high school counselors, he instituted a plan which consists of the administration of a college and career interest survey to juniors and seniors, as well as the production of the following: a counselors's resource manual, a form to indicate the students

plans, as well as of procedures for a late summer and October follow-up.

The main purpose of this program was to keep on track those many students who "get lost" or "fall between the cracks" after graduation by making planning for the 13th year as routine as the previous 12. The student may choose, on his/her main plan, a job, the service, or a selective university, but is also expected to plot out a fall back position just in case the first choice doesn't come through (the financial aid package isn't sufficient, etc). These back-up plans often include Triton College i.e., for summer course work for those who actually go to and continue at other universities or, for students who start in jobs, the option of taking a course or two while they continue working. For many who go away to large universities, the back-up plan is important because frequently they leave (often for non-academic reasons) sometime during the first semester. With the Post-Secondary Plan they can easily fit into Triton without skipping a beat for at least the next semester (and in some cases the next three or more semesters) before going on to a four-year school again.

Similarly, as a part of the Post-Secondary Plan, students are informed of other Triton services, which include the career placement, the job placement, and the computer centers, library and tutoring services--all available without charge--while the students are still enrolled in high school.

The follow-up of high risk students is conducted in late July or early August and then again in October. High risk students, as defined for this program, are those who are first-generation high school graduates, first-generation college attendees, undecided students, or those students whose parents did not respond to or acknowledge the high school counselor's attempts to share the students post-secondary plan. Each high school utilizes summer counselors, faculty, or clerical staff to conduct the follow-up. Calls are made to see if student's plans have in fact been actualized or if changes have occurred and then to offer assistance as necessary.

REGIONAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Regional Vocational Articulation project consists of the development of: the district-wide educational opportunity for high school students and, the assurance of smooth transfer of knowledge and credit to students who choose Triton College as a post-secondary institution.

Essentially a 2 + 2/prep-tech program, the high school course objective articulation with Triton, has been completed and is in place for the fall 1989. It includes the broad areas of business, industrial technology, and home economics. In the business area, four programs have been completed including:

* accounting/bookkeeping
* office information support services
* secretarial
* marketing

In the industrial technology area, all of the following six programs will be in place:

* construction
* drafting
* electronics
* graphic communications
* manufacturing
* transportation

Under the home economics umbrella are

* food services/hospitality
* child/adult care services

Because of the close work in articulation with high school instructors, new and even stronger ties were formed and this past year Triton hosted four instructor workshops for secondary teachers in the technical drafting/architecture, electronics, graphic arts, and the automotive areas.

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